

Amendments to the Claims

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) ~~The banded billing method of claim 1~~ A banded billing method for telecommunication services comprising:

maintaining in data storage a banded-pricing schedule that divides a continuum of minutes of use into a series of contiguous, mutually-exclusive minute-ranges and that specifies for each minute-range a respective cost;

determining a number of minutes of telecommunication service that were used by a given subscriber during a given period;

querying the banded-pricing schedule to determine which minute-range the number of minutes falls into, and to determine the cost specified by the banded-pricing schedule for that minute-range; and

billing the determined cost to the given subscriber, for use of the telecommunication service during the given period,

wherein the series of minute-ranges begins with a first minute-range of 0 to P minutes, and then continues with minute-ranges R_k , each extending from $\{P + (k-1)(Q) + 1\}$ minutes to $\{P + (k)(Q)\}$ minutes, wherein $k = 1, 2, 3, \dots, N$, and wherein Q is a number of minutes.

5. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 4, wherein $P = 300$, and wherein $Q = 25$.

6. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 5, wherein $N = 14$.
7. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 4, wherein:
the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for the first minute-range is C , and
the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for each subsequent minute-range R_k is $C + (k)(G)$, wherein G is an incremental cost.
8. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 7, wherein $G = \$2.50$.
9. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 4, wherein, after N minute-ranges following the first minute-range, the series of minute-ranges continues with minute-ranges R_j , each extending from $\{P + (N)(Q) + (j-1)(T) + 1\}$ minutes to $\{P + (N)(Q) + (j)(T)\}$ minutes, wherein $j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, M$, and wherein T is a number of minutes greater than Q .
10. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 9, wherein $T = 50$.
11. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 9, wherein:
the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for the first minute-range is C ,
the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for each subsequent minute-range R_k is $C + (k)(G)$, wherein G is an incremental cost, and
the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for each subsequent minute-range R_j is $C + (N)(G) + (j)(G)$.

12. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 4, wherein, after N minute-ranges following the first minute-range, the series of minute-ranges continues with minute-ranges R_j , each extending from $\{P + (N)(Q) + (j-1)(Q) + 1\}$ minutes to $\{P + (N)(Q) + (j)(Q)\}$ minutes, wherein $j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, M$, and wherein:

the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for the first minute-range is C,

the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for each subsequent minute-range R_k is $C + (k)(G)$, wherein G is an incremental cost, and

the cost that the banded-pricing schedule specifies for each subsequent minute-range R_j is $C + (N)(H) + (j)(H)$, wherein H is an incremental cost less than G.

13. (Original) The banded billing method of claim 12, wherein H is half of G.

14. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the telecommunication service comprises wireless telecommunication service.

15. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the telecommunication service comprises voice telecommunication service.

16. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the telecommunication service comprises data telecommunication service.

17. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein determining the number of minutes of telecommunication service that were used by the given

subscriber in the given period comprises extracting usage data from call detail records generated by one or more telecommunication switches.

18. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the given period is a month.

19. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, further comprising:

treating as a minute of use any partial minute used at a conclusion of a communication session.

20. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein billing the determined cost to the subscriber comprises recording the cost in a subscriber account record.

21. (Currently amended) The banded billing method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein billing the determined cost to the given subscriber comprises generating and sending to the given subscriber an invoice indicating the determined cost.

22-30. (Cancelled)